GARY M. SHIFFMAN

War veteran turned economist and AI entrepreneur helping people trust their instincts and reclaim creative confidence—merging human insight and modern science to explore power, behavior, and the bold action sparked by the right questions.

MEDIA CONTACT

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ABOUT GARY

Gary M. Shiffman has navigated from battlefields to boardrooms, from government war rooms to startup launches and exits. As a war veteran turned economist and applied Artificial Intelligence researcher, he explores the frontiers where AI meets the human condition—holding senior national security positions in the U.S. government, running P&L operations across companies large and small, co-founding two AI-based software companies, and leading DARPA research that pushes the boundaries between artificial intelligence and humanity.

In the DARPA lab, for example, he led research combining machine learning and economic science to build mathematical models of risk to people living in conflict zones.

Today, Gary teaches economics at Clemson University's Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business, serves on several boards, and speaks globally about power, violence, markets, and technology.

At his core, Gary empowers groups to make sense of a complex world by grounding complex ideas in first principles. His talks don't offer easy answers—they ask the most important questions which lead to clarity and confidence, so that dedicated and passionate teams have better tools to find their own answers.

11,000+

Engaged audience of Founders, Presidents, CEOs in the Finance, IT, Consulting, and SaaS Industries
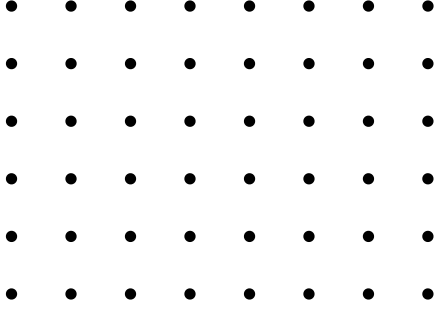
SPEAKING STYLE, TALK OPTIONS & AUDIENCE TAKEAWAYS

STYLE
Narrative and conversational—philosophical, rigorous, and grounded in real-world experience, with an emphasis on inquiry over instruction.

TONE
Earnestly empowering and intellectually provocative, inviting audiences to think critically, speak confidently, and engage deeply with the systems shaping our world.

AUDIENCE
- CEOs, entrepreneurs, founders
- Policy makers, national security professionals, foreign affairs affinity groups
- Technologists, educators, and intellectual explorers
- Anyone who's ever asked, "Why do people do that?"

AUDIENCE TAKEAWAY
You'll leave with a mental model you can reuse the next time the world doesn't make sense—whether you're facing tech disruption, political crisis, or cultural upheaval. Gary's talks don't offer answers—they unlock clarity through inquiry, helping curious, motivated teams think more critically, speak more confidently, and navigate complexity on their own terms.

TALK OPTIONS
- Standard Keynote: 45–60 minutes
- With Q&A: 60–75 minutes
- Interactive Workshop or Fireside Format: Available upon request

1 FROM WARFARE TO CORPORATE STRATEGY: THE ECONOMICS OF COMPETITION

What if terrorism, insurgency, and corporate disruption all follow the same logic? Gary reveals how the same market forces that drive armed conflict also shape business competition.

2 AI, POWER, AND THE FUTURE OF COERCION

What happens when machines learn not just to reason, but to manipulate, threaten, and dominate? Gary explores how AI — trained on human behavior — will inherit not just our brilliance but our darker instincts.

3 WHY ORGANIZATIONS FAIL — AND HOW THEY CAN ADAPT IN THE AGE OF AI

Organizations don't collapse because of bad people — they collapse when incentives drift from mission and truth. Gary reveals how AI and complexity accelerate this drift — and how to redesign for resilience.

KEYNOTE SPEAKING TOPICS

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4 **LEADERSHIP IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD: PRINCIPLES FOR NAVIGATING MODERN COMPLEXITY**

Traditional command-and-control leadership is dead — and pretending otherwise is dangerous. As hierarchies flatten and markets fragment, leadership requires navigating chaos.

5 **BREAKING PATH DEPENDENCE: HOW AI CAN FREE YOUR ORGANIZATION FROM LEGACY THINKING**

Every organization gets trapped by its own success. What yesterday becomes tomorrow's limitation. Gary uses compelling case studies to show how AI can either reinforce old traps — or become a tool to break them.
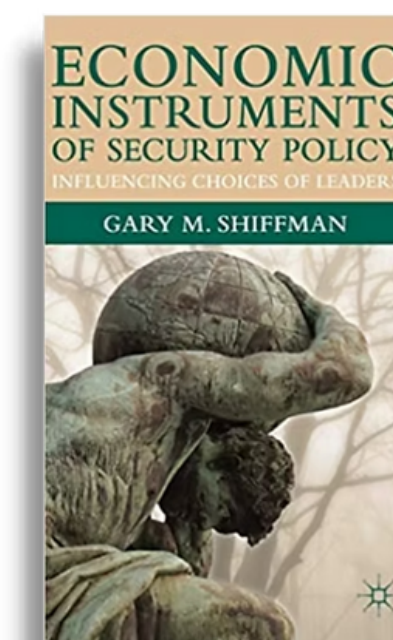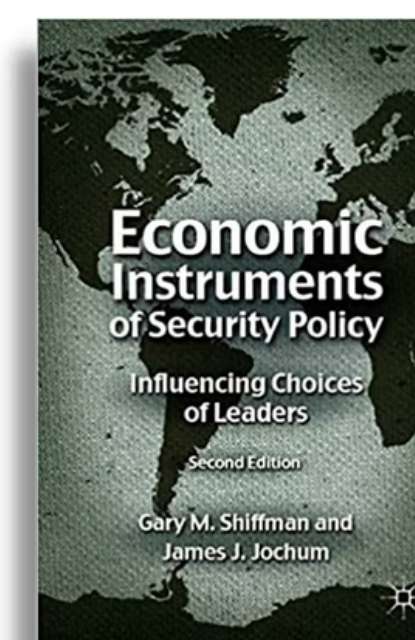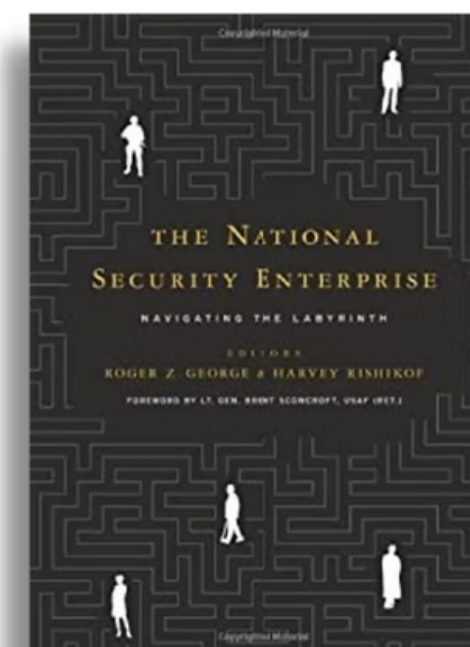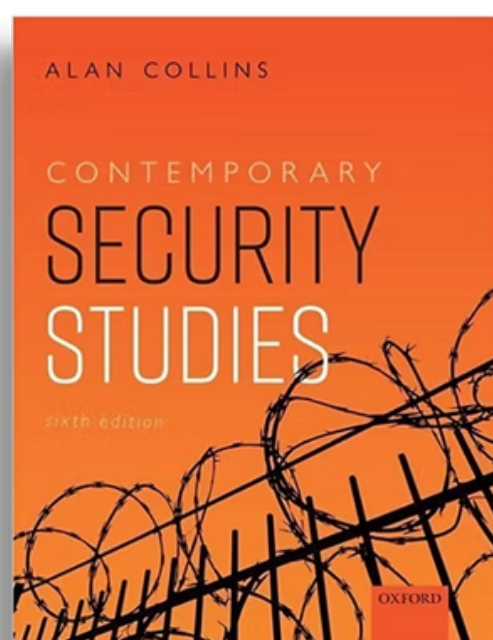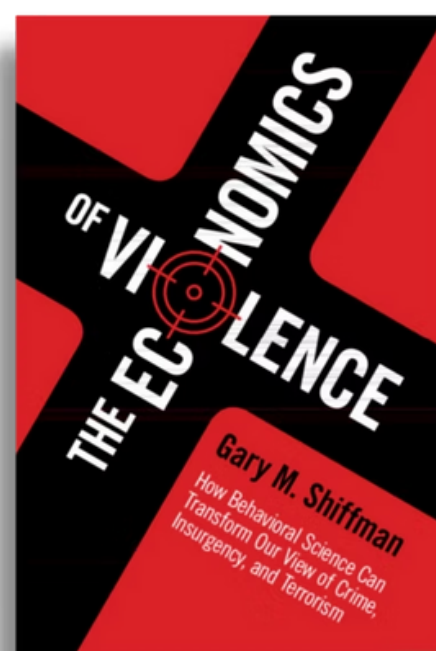
6 **INCOMPUTABLE: WHAT MACHINES CAN'T DO — AND WHY IT MATTERS**

AI can imitate. But only humans can think. Drawing on Alan Turing, Gödel, and Hannah Arendt, Gary guides audiences through incomputability — from mathematical limits to moral clarity.

PUBLICATIONS

EXAMPLE EVENTS

SELECT PODCASTS

	[EconTalk](#) — The Economics of Violence
	[Irregular Warfare Podcast](#) — War Entrepreneurs
	[AML Conversations](#) — Ethics of AI
	[The Ncast Podcast](#) — AI and Risk Explained
	[New Books Network](#) — The Economics of Violence

SELECT TALKS

"REAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE." TEDX GREENVILLE, 2025.

"AI AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT." CITY CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP FORUM, 2025.

"BUILDING AI UNDERSTANDING FOR SUCCESS IN A DISRUPTED JOB MARKET." ACADEMIC CONFERENCE, 2024.

"IMPACT OF AI ON THE ECONOMY." CITY ECONOMICS CLUB, 2024.

"THE TALIBAN, JIMMY FALLON, AND TIANANMEN: FINDING MEANING DURING MOMENTS OF CHANGE." CONFERENCE OF PRODUCT MANAGERS AND TECHNOLOGY CREATIVES, 2023.

"UNDERSTANDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE." U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY AGENCY CONFERENCE KEYNOTE, 2023.

"THE ETHICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADOPTION." CORPORATE BANKING CONFERENCE, 2022.

"MACHINE LEARNING AND AI: FROM MITIGATING BIAS TO MAXIMIZING VALUE." CORPORATE BANKING CONFERENCE, 2022.

"ETHICS AND MANAGING THE RISK OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND MACHINE LEARNING." CORPORATE BANKING CONFERENCE, 2022.

"WHERE THERE IS NO TRUTH, THERE CAN BE NO TRUST: UNDERSTANDING BIAS IN DATA RISK MANAGEMENT." CONFERENCE OF COMPLIANCE EXECUTIVES AND PRACTITIONERS, 2021.

"HOW TO ENGAGE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CYBERTHREATS." CORPORATE CONFERENCE, 2020.

"BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR FUTURE TECHNOLOGY - NOW!" 2020.

SPEAKING FEES

IN-PERSON KEYNOTE

$20,000 plus travel.

Virtual rates available upon request

ETHICS CAN BE COMPUTED; MORALITY TRANSCENDS COMPUTATION.

Excerpted from an essay delivered to the Literary Society of Washington, DC on April 5, 2025.

GARY SHIFFMAN

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